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Lucia A Keegan 08/31/2006 09:43:13 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 005811

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EUN](#) [UNSC](#) [NATO](#) [FR](#) [XF](#)  
SUBJECT: FRANCE'S PRESIDENT CHIRAC OUTLINES KEY FOREIGN  
POLICY AREAS (MIDDLE EAST, EU/NATO, UN REFORM) OF CONCERN

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 B/D.

¶1. (C) Summary: President Chirac's annual foreign policy speech to France's ambassadors August 29 focused in particular on Middle East issues and crises, including Lebanon. He warned of clashes of civilizations (including between rich and poor), and stressed the importance of political processes over violence. He called for renewed efforts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He expressed respect for Iran while calling on it to abandon its "secret programs." In contrast, he urged Syria merely to break out of its isolation. He encouraged reform of the UN, including through enlargement of the Security Council. He reiterated France's commitment to Africa, Unitaid, and cultural diversity.

¶2. (C) Chirac regretted that the European Union had not played a more prominent role during the Lebanon crisis and, in an apparent indirect reference to the U.S., called on Europe "to emancipate itself from inhibitions" and deal with its partners--including "grand poles" such as China--on the basis of the continent's objective interests. Chirac vaunted ESDP operations in Macedonia, Bosnia, Aceh, the DRC, and soon Kosovo, while calling for NATO--with an eye to the Riga Summit--to limit itself to its traditional collective security obligations. End summary.

## Middle East - Lebanon

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¶3. (SBU) On August 28, in his annual speech before the Foreign Ministry's conference for French Ambassadors, which also marks the foreign policy establishment's return to business after the summer pause, President Chirac characterized Lebanon as the weak fault line where all Middle East conflicts intersect, a place that "attracts the blows the protagonists do not dare to inflict on each other." Citing Iraq, tensions in the Gulf, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he called the Middle East a place where "regional conflagrations could result in a divorce between worlds, East and West, Islam and Christianity, rich and poor." (Comment: this reference to a clash of civilizations has been a recurring GOF theme in recent weeks.)

¶4. (U) Chirac reviewed France's role in drafting UN Resolution 1701 and vaunted his decision to substantially reinforce France's military commitment to UNIFIL. To move forward, he called upon the UNSYG to initiate a political process in which all parties honor the disarmament process and settle border issues, including the status of Shebaa farms. He noted the importance of stability for the future of Lebanon and the security of Israel. He also urged Israel to lift its "crippling economic blockade on Lebanon" and called on unnamed regional players to accept a sovereign and independent Lebanon "in which the State exercises exclusive authority throughout its entire territory." He praised Lebanon's decision to deploy the Lebanese army to southern Lebanon. Finally, Chirac announced France's intention to organize an international conference on Lebanon.

## Israel and the Palestinians

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¶5. (SBU) Describing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the core issue in the Middle East, Chirac proposed an immediate return to diplomatic negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and urged the Quartet to convene as soon as possible. Maintaining the status quo risked allowing violence to spin out of control. To move forward, both sides must reestablish confidence in the other and define the parameters for co-existence. Chirac reiterated that Hamas must accept its role as a legitimate political player, forswear violence and affirm the terms of the Oslo accords, while Israel must accept that its security is linked to the creation of a Palestinian state with secure and viable borders. He called on moderate Arab states, who attended the 2002 summit in Beirut, to play an essential role in promoting a resolution.

## Iran and Syria

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¶6. (SBU) Chirac called on Iran to abandon its "secret programs" and to create the conditions under which it can regain the trust of the international community. He referred to Iran as a "great country," but one that must accept its responsibility to contribute to regional stability. He merely urged Syria to "break its self-imposed isolation," and respect international law and the sovereignty of its neighbors.

## The European Union and NATO

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¶7. (SBU) Chirac used the example of the Middle East conflict to appeal for a strong, internationally relevant Europe that can "contribute to a constructive dialogue with the great world powers." He called upon Europe to "emancipate itself from inhibitions" and deal with its "partners" according to the continent's own interests. (Comment: While the reference was cryptic, this appeared to be an indirect call for an EU foreign policy more independent of the U.S.) While he avoided past references to "multipolarity", Chirac talked of "grand poles" and identified an emerging China as a significant power on the horizon. He regretted that Europe had not done

more to promote a resolution to the Lebanese crisis and called on the EU to confer greater responsibility on the EU's High Representative so that he might speak and act on behalf of the EU's 25 members, as he has been doing on the Iranian (nuclear) issue, citing the EU's successful operations in Macedonia, Bosnia, Aceh, and the DRC. The President noted that NATO's next challenge will be in Kosovo.

¶8. (SBU) Chirac observed that the EU can reinforce transatlantic "solidarity" by assuming its share of defense responsibilities in such places as the Balkans. As for NATO, President Chirac said he looked forward to a successful NATO summit at Riga. However, he emphasized that NATO must remain above all a military alliance dedicated to ensuring the collective security of European and North American allies. (Comment: Chirac made no explicit reference to the United States.) He cautioned against NATO involvement "in non-military missions, ad hoc partnerships, technological ventures or an insufficiently prepared enlargement (that) could only distort its purpose."

#### Europe and Globalization

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¶9. (U) Chirac touched on the need to assert Europe's identity against a "backdrop of globalization." Europe should work together toward the assurance of long-term energy security, an appraisal of climate change and the establishment of widespread partnerships with countries of origin and transit of illegal immigrants. European enlargement is consistent with and essential to the challenges of globalization, he contended. Still, he recommended that the European Union's absorption of new countries be a controlled and carefully considered process that proceeds concomitantly with urgently needed, democracy-based institutional reforms.

#### The United Nations

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¶10. (U) Chirac reiterated his belief in the overarching importance of the UN and announced his intention to reaffirm the need for UN reform, particularly through the enlargement of the Security Council, when he addresses the opening session of the General Assembly in New York. In his UN remarks, he plans to further reiterate French support for Unitaïd, which leverages an airline ticket tax to furnish funds for life-saving drugs in developing countries.

#### Africa

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¶11. (U) French projects in Africa, as at the UN, are "at the heart of our endeavor to bring about a more just and stable world," he averred. Chirac called for free and transparent elections based on new electoral rolls in Cote d'Ivoire; Sudan's immediate acceptance of a UN operation there with support from the African Union; and all parties' respect for the verdict of elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Further, he urged a respect for cultural diversity and dialogue between civilizations, a message he will take to the Francophony Summit in Bucharest next month.

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